

Accreditation Process Checklist, 2006–07

This document is designed as a procedural checklist that is organized as a timeline for administrators who are carrying out the accreditation process for their education units.

Authority for Public School Accreditation

The State Board of Education (SBE) accredits all education units—boards of trustees and district operations, elementary schools, middle schools, secondary schools, and career and technology education centers—under the provisions of Regulation 43-300. A set of accreditation standards derived from state statutes and/or regulations governs each education program. These statutes and regulations are available online: SBE regulations are accessible at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/stateboard/regs/>; the state's laws concerning education, which are contained in Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, are accessible at <http://www.scstatehouse.net/code/titl59.htm>.

State Department of Education (SDE) Documents and Staff

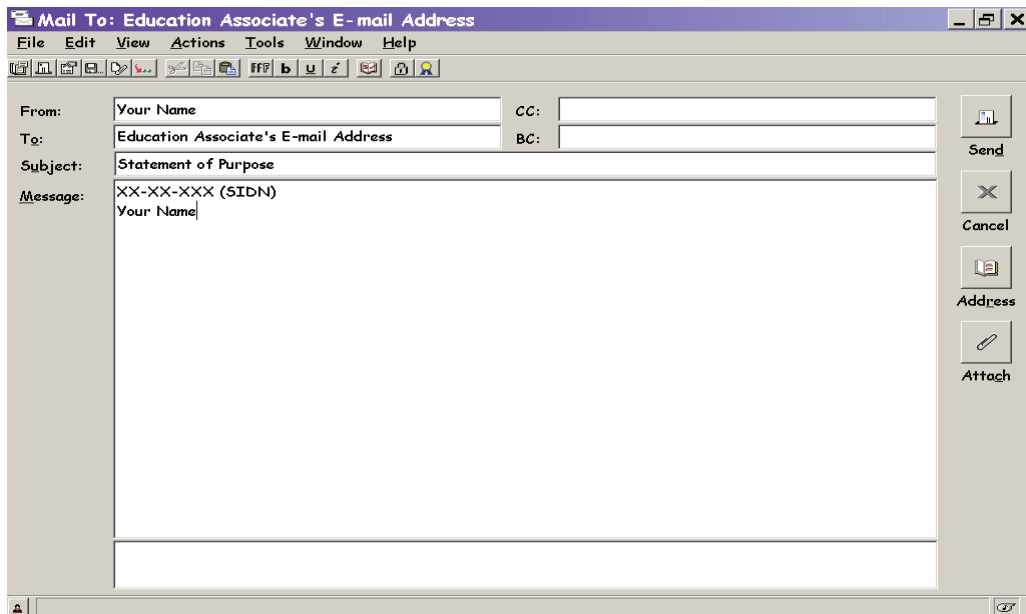
The forms and other documents related to the accreditation process that are referenced in this checklist are accessible online through the links on the Web page titled “Accreditation Documents, Forms, and Notifications,” at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/sq/acc/accinfo.html>.

The education associates who serve as accreditation program staff members in the SDE's Office of School Quality are available throughout the year to respond to questions about accreditation procedures and to provide technical assistance. An education associate is assigned to assist each county/school. Locate the name of your assigned education associate by clicking the “Accreditation Staff Contacts” on the “Accreditation Forms and Documents” Web page.

Contacting the SDE about Accreditation

Use this address for regular mail: Accreditation Program, State Department of Education, 2611 Forest Drive, Suite 111, Columbia, South Carolina 29204.

Send all e-mail correspondence to the education associate assigned to the county/school:



The screenshot shows an email client window with the title bar 'Mail To: Education Associate's E-mail Address'. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Actions, Tools, Window, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for various email functions. The main area is divided into fields for 'From:', 'To:', 'Subject:', and 'Message:'. The 'From:' field contains 'Your Name'. The 'To:' field contains 'Education Associate's E-mail Address'. The 'Subject:' field contains 'Statement of Purpose'. The 'Message:' field contains 'XX-XX-XXX (SIDN)' and 'Your Name|'. On the right side of the window, there are buttons for 'Send', 'Cancel', 'Address', and 'Attach'.

- The subject line of the e-mail must contain a statement of the purpose of the correspondence, followed by the school name.
- The message must begin with the school identification number (SIDN) on the first line and the administrator's name on the second line. (Official accreditation correspondence via e-mail must contain the SIDN in lieu of the administrator's signature. For verification of the school SIDN, refer to your Accreditation Compliance Form or contact the Accreditation Unit at 803-734-8333. The SIDN is located in the upper left-hand corner of the preliminary analysis printout, which is discussed below.)

ACCREDITATION PROCESS TIMELINE

September

All administrators receive a memorandum from the director of the Office of School Quality requiring them to complete the Accreditation Compliance Form. This form will serve as the education unit's "application for accreditation" referenced in SBE Regulation 43-300. In order to be able to complete the form, the administrator must verify compliance with the standards for his or her particular type of education unit. The administrator must use the Internet to access the standards because they are no longer enclosed with the memorandum.

Apply for accreditation by doing the following:

- ☐ Review the standards by clicking the appropriate links under the heading "Accreditation Standards" on the "Accreditation Documents, Forms and Notifications" Web page. Be certain that you examine *all* of the standards documents that apply to your education unit's grade range.
- ☐ Complete the compliance form online by following the directions provided in the memorandum from the director of the Office of School Quality.
- ☐ Update the contact information.
- ☐ Check the appropriate box on the Accreditation Compliance Form to indicate whether or not the education unit is in compliance with all standards.
- ☐ Specify on the form your unit's noncompliance issues, if any.

If you are newly employed in this administrative position (regardless of the point in the school year at which you were employed), you must send an e-mail notification with the subject line "Administrator Name Change—[*education unit name*]" to jperry@ed.sc.gov. In the message box, enter the SIDN in lieu of a signature on the first line and your name as the new administrator on the second line. Type your message in the remaining space.

October

- ☐ Complete the compliance form by October 15.

November

- ☐ Verify that education unit data submissions to the district are accurate. Data from the district must be submitted to the SDE according to the schedules provided to the school districts by the SDE.

It is vital to the evaluation of your education unit's compliance with the standards that you submit accurate information.

The following SDE data collections are integrated into a computer program that identifies issues of noncompliance (also referred to as deficiencies or citations) for each education unit:

- **The professional certified staff (PCS) listing.** This data collection is based upon the position codes that are assigned to professional instructional staff; districts update the listing annually in November. (See "Explanations of Selected Noncompliance Issues," below, for a suggested use of the field "Staff Notes" in the PCS.)
- **The student accounting system.** The number of students enrolled and the number of professional instructional staff employed are prorated to determine if the ratio required by Regulation 43-205 is met.
- **Certification files for professional instructional staff.** These files are downloaded from the Office of Educator Certification and are used to determine whether a professional instructional staff member holds a South Carolina certificate, whether the staff member is properly certified for the position he or she currently holds, or whether the staff member's certificate has expired.

The required credentials—both proper certification and all required attendant training—for all professional staff members are set forth in *Required Credentials for Professional Staff Members in the Instructional Programs of South Carolina's Public Schools*, available online at http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/SQ/acc/documents/reqCred07_002.pdf.

- **First-quarter (45-day) SASI™ data collection.** This fourth collection of data, which is not integrated into the computer program mentioned above, is generated from the first quarter (45-day) SASI data collection. These data are used to identify staff members who teach core content subject areas and are not "highly qualified."

If your education unit or district has submitted erroneous data to the SDE or has failed to update the data for any one of these collections, an issue of noncompliance may be the result and extra work for you will be created: you must respond to all noncompliance issues, regardless of their origin.

December

- ☐ Verify your receipt of an accreditation packet. If you have not received a packet by January 15, contact the education associate assigned to your education unit.

The accreditation packet, which is not available online, contains three items:

- a memorandum that states the required return date and provides pertinent information for the current school year,
- the preliminary analysis NCR (no carbon required) printout(s) containing any issues of noncompliance, and
- a school profile detailing data that have been submitted to the SDE by your district office.

The preliminary analysis printout contains a new section: “III. Personnel—No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.” The two boxes that appear under the section heading are “Deficiencies were not indicated,” and “Deficiencies indicated for NCLBA are listed on the attached printout ‘2006–07 Core Content Teachers Who Are Not Highly Qualified.’” Neither of these boxes is marked. Instead, an NCR printout, “2006–07 Core Content Teachers Who Are Not Highly Qualified,” may be mailed to those schools that have teachers named on that printout. No response to this NCR printout will be required.

This NCR printout will have no bearing on the school’s accreditation status this year. Rather, the “2006–07 Core Content Teachers Who Are Not Highly Qualified” printout will allow recipients to preview the number of staff members who are not “highly qualified” and who may therefore impact the school’s accreditation status in the future. The No Child Left Behind Act (Pub. L. No. 107-110) accreditation mandate that all teachers of core content subjects be “highly qualified” in the subject area of the particular course they are teaching will become effective under the conditions set forth in the SDE document *Revised State Plan for Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Goal*, which is available on the Educator Quality Web page at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/sc.doc>.

The preliminary analysis printout and school profile are generated in December after the November deadline for the submission of PCS data to the Office of Finance. Citations that you as an administrator report on the Accreditation Compliance Form are evaluated by the SDE and, if warranted, are added in handwriting on the preliminary analysis printout. Three copies of the preliminary analysis are generated at one time on NCR paper. The first copy is retained at the SDE, the second copy is sent to the education unit in an accreditation packet, and the third copy is sent to the school district office.

☐ Begin to resolve all noncompliance issues/citations specified on the preliminary analysis.

Structure the content of your response according to the directions that appear at the beginning of the preliminary analysis printout. Review any handwritten comments, citations, and noncompliance issues on the printout(s). Use the school profile to verify that correct education unit data were submitted to the SDE from the district office.

Explanations of Selected Noncompliance Issues

The following explanations may increase your understanding of some of the noncompliance issues that may appear on a preliminary analysis.

- Administrators, library media specialists, guidance counselors, and eligible teachers who are named in a noncompliance issue because they are assigned duties in an area for which they are not appropriately certified *may* qualify for an out-of-field permit issued by the Office of Educator Certification.

Teachers of core academic subject areas who are assigned duties in an area for which they are not properly certified and are named in a noncompliance issue are not eligible for out-of-field permits but may be eligible for restricted alternative certification from the Office of Educator Certification.

In both of the above instances, the district or school must initiate contact with the Office of Educator Certification to determine if the staff member is eligible for an out-of-field permit or a restricted alternative certificate. To resolve the issue of noncompliance, either an out-of-field permit or a restricted alternative certificate for every staff member named must be submitted to the Office of School Quality as part of the preliminary analysis response.

- Position codes 01 through 12 are designated for school-level professional staff. If a school-level professional staff member is not coded within that range, an issue of noncompliance may arise. A short list of school-level codes is in the table below. (The complete list of position codes is available from the SDE's Office of Finance online at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/finance/pcsinformation.html>.)

Professional Certified Staff Position Codes, Short List	
Position	Code
Principal	01
Assistant principal	02
Itinerant teacher	03
Prekindergarten teacher	04
Kindergarten teacher	05
Self-contained teacher	06
Resource teacher	07
Classroom teacher	08
Library media specialist	10
Guidance counselor	11
Other professional instruction-oriented staff	12

- Personnel who are coded "Other professional instruction-oriented staff" (code 12) will always appear as the following issue of noncompliance: "The following position requires individual evaluation: Please provide a job description." This issue requires a response because there are many position titles unique to an education unit for which a specific code will not apply.

There are two ways to handle this position code issue:

One way is to place the staff member's job title in "Staff Notes" in the PCS before the preliminary analysis is generated in November so that SDE staff can review the job title as part of the preliminary analysis evaluation. A handwritten "OK" on the printout means no response is necessary.

The second option is to simply provide the person's job title and attach a copy of his or her certificate in response to the marked citation on the preliminary analysis printout. *If an SDE accreditation staff member needs a full job description to evaluate whether or not the person's credentials meet the standard, the staff member will specifically request it.*

- If the position code provided for a professional staff member is miscoded on the PCS, a noncompliance issue will arise on the preliminary analysis.
- Not all professional staff members are required to hold administrative certificates or teaching certificates. Some examples are the following: Career Specialist (23), Technology/IT Personnel (27), Personnel Director (28), Other Personnel Positions (29), Transportation Director (34), Attendance Director (42), Parenting/Family Literacy Coordinator (83). If a noncompliance issue arises for one of these positions, respond by naming the staff member, specifying his or her position and the corresponding position code, and then stating that the position does not require a professional certificate. Here is an example: John Doe, Career Specialist (23), does not require a professional certificate.

- Special education teachers must be coded according to the service delivery model in which they teach: self-contained, itinerant, or resource. Refer to the position code listing above.

A staff member holding a special education certificate for Mental Disabilities (2H), Multicategorical (2I), or Severe Disabilities (2J) may be named in a noncompliance issue because these areas of special education certification are not recognized by the computer program for the preliminary analysis. If the staff member teaches in a preK–12 program and also holds at least one of the certificates required for his or her teaching area (as specified in the *Required Credentials* document), then respond using this sample as a guide: “Jane Doe is certified in the Multicategorical (2I) special education area and teaches in an LD self-contained class.”

- An issue of noncompliance may be cited for one of several reasons, as illustrated in the following chart on the page below.

Noncompliance Issue as Stated on the Preliminary Analysis Printout	Possible Circumstance Generating the Noncompliance Issue	Appropriate Administrator Response
“The services of the assistant principal or curriculum coordinator are inadequate for a school of this size.”	The assistant is miscoded. (The assistant was not coded an 02.)	Declare the assistant miscoded and submit the name of the assistant principal or the curriculum coordinator and a copy of his or her certificate. Request that the district change the assistant’s position code.
	No assistant was employed at the time of the preliminary analysis.	Provide the name of the new assistant principal or the new curriculum coordinator and a copy of his or her certificate.
	The ratio of assistant principal(s) to student enrollment did not meet standard.	Verify that the assistant is correctly coded on the school profile. Describe how the required ratio (stated in Regulation 43-205) will be met.
“The services of a guidance counselor are not provided.”	The guidance counselor serves two education units. The preliminary analysis program recognizes one education unit for each staff member.	Provide the name of the guidance counselor, a copy of his or her certificate, and the name of the other education unit this counselor serves.
	The guidance counselor is not coded 11.	Declare the counselor miscoded. Provide the name of the guidance counselor and a copy of his or her certificate. Request that the district change the counselor’s position code.

Noncompliance Issue as Stated on the Preliminary Analysis Printout	Possible Circumstance Generating the Noncompliance Issue	Appropriate Administrator Response
"The following staff member is not properly certified for the position held: <i>John Doe</i> Special education (self-contained)."	John Doe is teaching in a resource setting, not a self-contained setting.	Declare John Doe miscoded and provide documentation of his teaching assignment and certification. Request that the district change John Doe's position code from 06 to 07.

Some noncompliance issues cannot be resolved. In that case, the response is best kept short: simply state "The deficiency has not been resolved." There is no need to write about plans to remove the deficiency. Either the deficiency is resolved, or it is not. If a citation is included on the preliminary analysis due to erroneous data, you must submit to the SDE the appropriate documentation to resolve the issue. You should also request that your district correct the data.

January

- ☐ Continue to resolve all issues of noncompliance for the preliminary analysis response.

SDE accreditation program staff will work directly with you or your superintendent's designee to resolve issues of noncompliance.

February

- ☐ Send your response to the preliminary analysis by the February 15 deadline to this address: Accreditation Program, State Department of Education, 2611 Forest Drive, Suite 111, Columbia, South Carolina 29204.

Your superintendent's designee may submit, under one cover, responses for each education unit's preliminary analysis. E-mail responses that do not require additional documentation, such as a copy of a certificate, will be accepted. The subject line should read "[*education unit name*]-Preliminary Analysis Response."

All responses must contain your education unit's SIDN.

March

Education associates continue to work with administrators or district designees to resolve any issues of noncompliance.

April

- ☐ Be alert to the fact that this month you should receive an accreditation classification memorandum specifying your education unit's final status.

The memorandum also specifies any remaining issues of noncompliance as well as the date beyond which they cannot be resolved. As an attachment to the district office memorandum, the SDE sends a "District Summary" to the superintendent listing the final classifications for all education units within his or her district.

May

The SDE presents the annual report, "Accreditation of School Districts in South Carolina," to the SBE for approval. The accreditation classification of each school district and of each education unit within that district is reported to the members of the local board of trustees, as required by Regulation 43-300.

- ☐ Be alert to the fact that the SDE sends an amended accreditation classification memorandum to the administrator of an education unit for which a noncompliance issue has now been resolved. The SDE then sends an amended "District Summary" to the superintendent.
- ☐ Be alert to the fact that this month information concerning the operation of a summer program under the SBE Regulations 43-240 and 43-234 is sent to the district superintendent. An accreditation classification is assigned for a district summer program and not to the education unit on whose campus the program is held.

August

- ☐ Be alert to the fact that this month summer program accreditation status is reported to the district superintendent. Summer program accreditation status is included in the annual report submitted to the State Board of Education each May.